

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This Amendment is in response to the Restriction Requirement of April 14, 2009. Initially, Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner and her supervisor taking the time to conduct a telephone interview with Applicants' undersigned attorney regarding the Restriction Requirement. In the Restriction Requirement, the Examiner has divided the original set of claims into three groups, namely, Group I including Claims 1-15 and 32-34; Group II including Claims 16-26; and Group III including Claims 27-31. Applicants hereby elect to prosecute the claims of Group II (including Claims 16-26) and expressly reserve the right to file divisional applications or take such other appropriate measures deemed necessary to protect the invention(s) in the remaining claims. Applicants have amended Claims 22 and 24 to more clearly recite the claimed invention.

As discussed during the telephone interview, Applicants have also amended independent Claims 27 and 31 of Group III to include features more akin to those of independent Claims 16 and 24 of Group II. At least by virtue of these amendments, Applicants respectfully submit that Group III should merge with Group II, and that the claims of Group III (i.e., Claims 27-31) should in turn be considered along with the claims of Group II (i.e., Claims 16-26). Should the Examiner have further questions or comments with respect to examination of this case, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned so that further examination of this application can be expedited.

Application No.: 10/598,627
Amendment Dated May 13, 2009
Reply to Office Action of April 14, 2009

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,



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